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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND
PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Fiftieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 4 August 1998, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. GUISSE

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(c) METHODS OF WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK:

(c) METHODS OF WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

(agenda item 1) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN stated that the Bureau had met on the previous day to discuss questions relating to the organization of the work of the Sub-Commission. He proposed that the major title of item 5 of the agenda be replaced by "The implementation of human rights with regard to women", the other language versions to be aligned on the English text. If there were no objections, the Chairman would consider that the Sub-Commission wished to approve that amendment.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN went on to say that the Bureau had also proposed the establishment of a working group on the administration of justice within the framework of agenda item 9. If there were no objections, he would consider that the Sub-Commission wished to establish a working group of that kind.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN then informed the members of the Sub-Commission of the proposals of the Bureau concerning speaking time. Members of the Sub-Commission would be allowed a maximum of 15 minutes (for one or more statements). Special rapporteurs and chairmen of working groups would be allowed a maximum of 20 minutes (to be divided between the initial presentation of the report and the conclusions). Government observers would be allowed 10 minutes on each theme (15 minutes for composite themes) and 5 minutes before any vote concerning the observer's own country. The time allowed to government observers exercising a right of reply would be 5 minutes for the first intervention and 3 minutes for the second (to be exercised at the end of the debate on each agenda item). For observers from intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, national liberation movements and other organizations the time allowance would be the same as that for government observers, i.e., 10 minutes. Statements by observers from non-governmental organizations would be restricted to 10 minutes per theme (15 minutes for composite themes and for joint statements).

6. Mr. ALFONSO MARTÍNEZ suggested that flexibility should be shown in the enforcement of the rule concerning the right of reply of government observers. The latter should be able to exercise their right of reply either at the end of the debate on the agenda item under consideration or at the end of the meeting or the day.

7. Mr. KHALIFA considered that the maximum of 15 minutes allowed for statements by members of the Sub-Commission was much too strict, particularly with regard to consideration of agenda item 2.

8. Mrs. WARZAZI was certain that the Bureau would show flexibility in this matter. She pointed out that, all in all, between the experts who did not take up the whole of their time allowance and those who exceeded it, the maximum of 15 minutes would probably be more or less complied with.

9. Mr. JOINET, turning to the draft schedule distributed, asked why it was proposed to allow less time for the Working Group on the Administration of Justice than in earlier years. He also asked whether the time allotted for consideration of item 2 and item 9 respectively was the same as that allotted for those items at the previous session.

10. The CHAIRMAN remarked that the rules laid down concerning the time allowed for experts' statements could be applied with a measure of flexibility. As regards the right of reply of government observers, the Bureau would ensure that they could make their statements either at the end of the debate or at the end of the meeting or the day. Finally, he explained that the reason for allocating one hour less than during the previous year for the Working Group on the Administration of Justice was that a number of points had been considered during the previous year, and that consequently the Working Group would have more time to devote to the points mentioned by Mr. Joinet. The time allotted for agenda items 2 and 9 was the same as in 1997.

11. Mr. BENGOA considered that insufficient time had been allotted for agenda item 4 in the draft schedule. He formally requested the Bureau to take remedial action.

12. In the light of the different suggestions made by members of the Sub-Commission, the draft schedule and the proposals of the Bureau concerning speaking time were adopted.

13. In conclusion, the CHAIRMAN stated that the Bureau had considered the possibility of taking a position on the items which might form the subject of biennial consideration either during the debate on those items or during the debate on the agenda of the fifty-first session of the Sub-Commission.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.